GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:382
ANSWERED ON:14.12.2016
Inspection of Passport Offices
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passport offices, Seva Kendras and Common Service Centres (CSCs) in various States inspected during the last three years and the current year;

(b) the major lapses/irregularities noticed, regional passport office-wise along with corrective action taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether the Government has any proposal to establish CSCs for the passport related services in the rural and remote areas;

(d) if so, the details of such centres set up/proposed to be set up in various States including Andhra Pradesh; and

(e) the time by which these centres are likely to be operational?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 382 REGARDING "INSPECTION OF PASSPORT OFFICES" FOR ANSWER ON 14.12.2016

(a) A list Passport Offices and Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) inspected during 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 till date is enclosed at Annexure-I. The Ministry of External Affairs is not conducting any inspection of CSCs as they are under the administrative control of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

(b) During the inspection of the PSKs, compliance with ten Non-Technical Service Level Agreements (SLAs) by the Service Provider M/s Tata Consultancy Service (TCS) is examined. At the time of inspection of the Passport Offices, administrative, establishment, Organization and Method (O&M) and technical matters are examined.

Shortcomings noticed after the inspection of PSKs are as follows:

(i) Upkeep and maintenance of the PSK;
(ii) Bunched up appointments and overcrowding in the morning;
(iii) Cleanliness of public toilets;
(iv) Insufficient cooling due to overcrowding; and
(v) Absence of staff.

Deficiencies observed after the inspection of Passport Offices are as follows:

(i) Upkeep and maintenance of the buildings of the Passport Offices;
(ii) Shortage of staff;
(iii) Delays in printing and despatch of passports;
(iv) Absence of prompt redressal of grievances of passport seeking public; and
(v) Absence of requisite amenities for passport applicants visiting the passport offices.

After each inspection, a list of shortcomings and deficiencies noticed are sent to the concerned Passport Office and M/s TCS with instructions to take prompt remedial steps.

(c) to (e) The Common Services Centres (CSCs) are internet enabled access points for delivery of various citizen centric eServices, including Government to Citizen (G2C), Business to Consumer (B2C), Utility Services, etc. CSC e-Governance Services India Limited being the CSC Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC-SPV) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) are enabling delivery of various eServices by integrating different service access portals at National level, including Passport Seva.

CSC−SPV is also mandated to monitor the operation of CSC outlets and provide hand-hold supports to CSC operators called Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs). Necessary coordination with Central Ministries/ Departments/ States/ Union Territories (UTs) and other organizations are also being done by CSC−SPV on a regular basis.

With a view to address the challenge of digital divide, especially in the rural hinterland, the Ministry of External Affairs in association with CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. has facilitated online filing of passport applications, through the vast network of 2,53,160 Common Service Centres (CSCs) across the country out of which 1,54,651 are located at Gram Pranchayat level. Till November, 2016, more than 3.4 lakhs applications have been submitted through CSCs located in all States/UTs. The CSCs facilitate filling and uploading of Passport application forms, payment of applicable fee and scheduling of appointment for the visit to the Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) at nominal charge not exceeding Rs. 100/-.

MeitY is expanding the CSC network till Gram Panchayat (GP) level under CSC 2.0 project of Digital India Programme for an equitable access to eServices by the citizens. It has aimed to set up at least one CSC in every Gram Panchayat (GP) across the country by August 2019. Implementation of CSC 2.0 at GP level is based on a service delivery/ transaction oriented model with effort towards optimum utilization of infrastructure created in the form of BharatNet/ NOFN and other communication infrastructure available in the States/ UTs. Presently, CSC is completely an entrepreneurship model with no viability gap funding for hardware and infrastructure support to the VLEs from Government of India. For day-to-day operation of CSCs and knowledge up-gradation on new services, the VLEs are being provided with handholding supports through training on Enterprise Development Programme. A State/UT wise statement showing number of CSCs including at Gram Panchayat level is enclosed at Annexure-II.